

CA24N
DE 800
- 20E01

INTERIM REPORT

OF

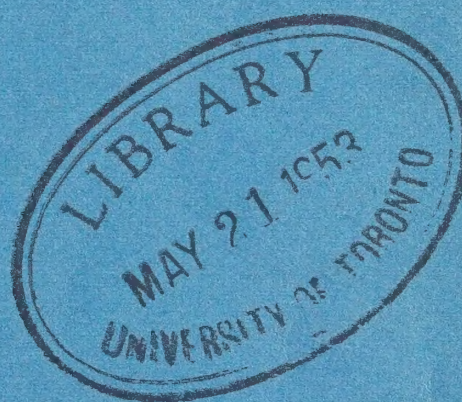
(THE) COMMITTEE

ON

High School Education

PRINTED BY ORDER OF

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO



TORONTO:

Printed by CLARKSON W. JAMES, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty

1921

INTERIM REPORT
OF
THE COMMITTEE
ON
High School Education

PRINTED BY ORDER OF
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO



TORONTO:

Printed by CLARKSON W. JAMES, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty

1921

Printed by
THE RYERSON PRESS.

THE COMMITTEE ON HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

CHAIRMAN:

F. W. Merchant.

REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITIES:

The University of Toronto:

W. J. Alexander,
F. B. Allan,

S. Beatty,
J. C. Robertson.

Queen's University:

J. F. Macdonald,

John Matheson.

McMaster University:

Walter S. W. McLay.

Western University:

K. P. R. Neville.

REPRESENTING THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION:

W. Pakenham.

REPRESENTING THE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTES AND THE HIGH SCHOOLS:

N. Bell,
H. W. Bryan,

A. J. Husband,
A. H. McDougall.

A. P. Gundry.

REPRESENTING THE CONTINUATION SCHOOLS:

A. C. Bernath,

Miss I. E. Dobbie.

REPRESENTING THE PUBLIC AND SEPARATE SCHOOL INSPECTORS:


A. L. Campbell, Miss A. E. Marty, J. F. Power.

REPRESENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:

J. P. Hoag,
J. A. Houston,
I. M. Levan,

G. K. Mills,
S. A. Morgan,
G. F. Rogers,

John Waugh.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761120598271>

INTERIM REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

TO THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION :

The Committee appointed last year to consider the desirability of changes in the High School system of the Province begs to present to you the following interim report.

This Committee, composed of High School and Continuation School teachers, Public and Separate School inspectors, officers of the Department and representatives named by the Universities, was asked "to review the courses of study and the examination system, and to consider any other question that affects the organization and efficiency of the schools." It had before it the tabulated results of two questionnaires of recent date, one on High School courses sent out by the Minister of Education, the other on Junior Matriculation, sent out by a committee of the Universities. The Committee has held a series of meetings, in which it received and discussed reports made by the various sub-committees into which it organized itself. Its work is by no means finished, but on some topics of primary importance it has with great unanimity reached conclusions which it deems it advisable to lay before you at this time.

THE PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED.

Throughout its deliberations the Committee has kept constantly in view certain lines along which it seems to it that improvement in existing conditions is especially desirable. The evolution of the High School system under constantly changing influences, and the cumulative effect of small causes, naturally enough bring about conditions calling periodically for a review and readjustment of policy. The features to which the Committee's attention has been drawn are due to various causes, of which three in particular may be mentioned: the difficulty of adjusting the necessarily diverse interests of the Universities and the Department of Education, whose examinations have so largely determined the courses of study; the endeavour (possibly a mistaken one) to avoid the overlapping of the Public School and the High School courses; and lastly, the gradual enlargement of the field of knowledge and the increasing number of subjects in which training is desired by different types of pupil.

The following are the problems to which the Committee has particularly addressed itself:

1. Better provision than is found in any existing course should be made for the special and varying needs of High School pupils who want a general education to fit them for their future life in the community, rather than the special preparation requisite for a University course or for one of the professions. The coming into force of the Adolescent School Attendance Act emphasizes the importance of such provision.

2. At present, from lack of anything more suitable, the Junior Matriculation examination (designed to serve a quite different purpose) has come to be treated very generally as a test of educational fitness for all kinds of positions. The result is that many pupils are pursuing what is for them an unsuitable course of study, and the Universities are criticized because it is unsuitable. There would seem to be need of a High School Graduation Diploma that would have a recognized value in every part of the Province, and, at the same time, would be given under such conditions as would induce a much larger number of general-course pupils to continue their studies.

3. More freedom should be given to the local authorities, both in the determination of the subjects of study to be pursued (especially by general-course pupils) and in the organization of the schools.

4. The excessive number of subjects taken concurrently, especially in the Lower School, is condemned on every hand. The congested time-table so dissipates the energies of both pupil and teacher that really satisfactory educational results are often impossible.

5. Certain difficulties in organization arise from the fact that the course for Junior Matriculation is, for the average pupil, rather too heavy to be covered in three years, and yet not heavy enough to require four full years' work. The alternative seems often to lie between a course too congested to be satisfactory or fruitful and one which encourages laxity and idleness.

6. Not a little of the congestion reported as existing in the schools is due to the necessity, in the second year of the Lower School or again in the second year of the Middle School, of carefully reviewing for examination subjects which had been studied and completed in the previous year. Moreover, in the Lower School this review often prejudicially affects even those who are not directly concerned with the examination at all, but whose preparation for the Middle School is none the less seriously hampered.

7. It has long been a subject of criticism and complaint that the conditions governing entrance to the High Schools so often make it impossible for pupils to secure admission at the age when the High School subjects can be taken to the best advantage.

8. Not only is there need of better provision for the pupils who wish such a general education as is afforded by the existing types of High School (both academic and vocational), but also it is desirable that other types of school should be established that would combine academic or cultural subjects with prevocational training of various kinds. Municipalities should be encouraged to experiment in the organization of such types of school.

GENERAL NATURE OF SOLUTION.

The recommendations made in this report will, the Committee believes, go far to provide a remedy for these conditions. The means through which a solution has been sought for the problems presented may be stated thus in general terms:

Courses of study have been drafted for the first and second years of the Lower School, for the Middle School, and for the Upper School. Only a few subjects are obligatory, chiefly in the Lower School. The optional subjects admit of variation according to local needs, whether these arise from geographical, commercial, or industrial reasons or from the particular ideals or qualifications of the Principal and his staff. The range of optional subjects also provides quite as thoroughly for the general student as for candidates for matriculation or intending teachers. The Committee has, moreover, recommended a minimum and a maximum number of subjects which the pupil should be allowed to take in each year of attendance, it being always understood that the Principal has liberty to make different arrangements for exceptional cases. Finally, certain modifications in the system of examination are recommended which will give the Principal freedom to organize his school so as to produce the best educational results.

These various changes would, it is believed, make it possible for High School Principals to frame a time-table with not more than eight teaching periods a day of about forty minutes each, and, as a rule, to provide for each subject a teaching period daily.

THE COURSES OF STUDY.

(a) The High School course, including Lower, Middle and Upper Schools, should be a five years' course, of which the first and second years belong to the Lower School. In the fourth year of the course, subjects of the Upper School may be taken with subjects of the Middle School, as the local authorities may decide.

(b) Physical training should continue to be obligatory in each year of the course.

A. *Lower School.*

Obligatory:

English (Literature, Composition).
 Physiography and Canadian History (each for one year.)
 Algebra or Geometry.

Optional:

Arithmetic (for one year).
 Grammar (for one year).
 Art.
 Geography (for one year).
 Botany and Zoology (each for one year), or Agriculture.
 Latin.
 French.
 Greek.
 German.
 Spanish or Italian.

Additional subjects recommended by the local authorities and approved by the Department (for example, Manual Training, Household Science, Music, Commercial subjects, etc.).

1. In each of the two years of the Lower School the pupils should take not less than *two* of the optional subjects, and not more than *eight* subjects altogether. It should be clearly understood that the decision of what optional subjects should be taken in a school in each year of the course rests not with the pupil, but with the Principal.

2. Composition, oral and written, should form part of the English work in each year of the High School course. Teachers of all subjects should demand good English composition in all written work.

3. Reading should be taught throughout the High School course in connection with the English literature, not as a separate subject.

4. Correct spelling and legible writing should be insisted on equally in all subjects.

5. Grammar as a formal course for one year should cover the general principles of syntax and etymology, together with a simple account of the development of the language. Aside from this formal course, Grammar should be taken as part of composition.

6. The character of the requirements in Art, especially as regards Freehand Drawing, is still under consideration.

7. In connection with each of the courses in History, the necessary Geography should be taught. A separate formal course in Geography for one year forms part of the optional list.

B. *Middle School.**Obligatory:*

English (Literature, Composition).

Optional:

(a) Algebra.

Geometry.

Physics.

Chemistry.

British History.

Ancient History or General European History.

(b) Latin.

Greek.

French.

German.

Spanish or Italian.

(c) Additional subjects recommended by the local authorities and approved by the Department (for example, Manual Training, Art, Household Science, Music, Commercial subjects, etc.).

1. Of the optional subjects in the Middle School, the minimum to be taken in one year should be *four*, and the maximum *seven*, the foreign languages in group (b) counting each as *two*. Where Middle School pupils in their fourth year take any Upper School subject it should be treated as a Middle School subject in determining the number of subjects to be taken.

2. If a course in Agriculture for the Middle School should be approved, it would be added to the list of optional subjects as equivalent to and in lieu of Physics and Chemistry.

C. *Upper School.*

English (Literature, Composition).

Mathematics (Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry).

Modern European History.

Physics.

Chemistry.

Biology (Botany and Zoology).

Latin.

Greek.

French.

German.

Spanish or Italian.

Additional subjects as recommended by the local authorities and approved by the Department.

1. For the Upper School no subject should be obligatory on all pupils, nor should any minimum or maximum number of subjects be prescribed, save by the local authorities.

EXAMINATIONS.

1. Candidates for any examination should be allowed to write on one or more subjects at a time in any order as approved by the Principal, and on obtaining the required percentage should be given credit for such subject or subjects.

The purpose of this recommendation is not to give freedom of election to pupils to study one or more subjects as they please. Rather it is intended that the Principal, no longer restricted by the exigencies of the present examination system, shall be free to organize the courses in his school with a single eye to the best interests of the pupils under his charge, and in harmony with his conception of what a true education calls for; and it is to be understood that with his knowledge of their needs he shall have authority to determine the subjects which individual pupils or groups of pupils would be required to take. Under the proposed system, subjects might be examined upon in the year in which they have been completed, without being held over for review and examination in a subsequent year, and pupils who have passed a satisfactory test in a subject would not be denied credit for the work done.

2. Certain modifications in the existing requirements for various examinations are suggested for the consideration of the Universities and the Department of Education, with whom rests the final decision. These include the following:

(a) That for Junior Matriculation an examination in Agriculture be accepted in lieu of Elementary Science (Physics and Chemistry), when a suitable course shall have been drafted and shall have been recognized by the Department of Education.

(b) That the requirements for entrance to the course for first-class teachers in Normal Schools (formerly known as "Faculty Entrance") be as follows:

A. *From the Lower School:*

Biology (when this subject is not selected as an option in the Upper School).

B. *From the Middle School:*

Physics.

Chemistry (when this subject is not selected as an option in the Upper School).

C. *From the Upper School:*

English.

History.

Two of—

Algebra.

Geometry.

Trigonometry.

Two of—

Latin.

Greek.

French.

German.

Spanish.

Biology (Botany and Zoology).

Physics and Chemistry (for either of which the third Mathematical subject may be substituted).

3. The conditions on which the High School Graduation Diploma is granted should be as follows:

The candidate must have passed an examination on *twelve* papers covering work of the Lower and Middle Schools, of which at least *six* papers must be on Middle School work.

Where a subject is selected on which an examination is held by the Department of Education or by the Matriculation Board, the candidate must take this examination; in other approved subjects there must be a test recognized by the Department.

While in the opinion of the Committee this Graduation Diploma should be granted (at least in the main) upon the results of provincial examinations, yet its establishment is not to be regarded as withdrawing any power which an individual High School or Collegiate Institute now possesses to issue graduation certificates based upon its own tests and standards.

Inasmuch as those who have passed the complete Junior Matriculation, or who have fulfilled the requirements for entrance to the course for second-class teachers in Normal Schools, will have complied with the conditions above specified, they would be entitled to receive this diploma. Additional subjects belonging to the Upper School could be credited on the diploma, which should indicate in every case the subjects taken for examination by the recipient. Thus one certificate of graduation, covering a wide variety of courses, would be established for the Province, and this of itself would tend to enhance its value.

CHANGES IN HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS.

With a view to improving the courses in various individual subjects the following recommendations are made by the Committee:

English Literature.

1. That the teachers be left free as at present to read whatever they wish with classes not writing on Departmental or University examinations. It is recommended that lists of books be drawn up for the guidance of teachers in selecting the work to be read each year of the course.

2. That the prescribed work for each examination consist of two parts:

(a) Literature for intensive study.

(b) Literature for extensive study.

3. That the intensive work be one play of Shakespeare in the case of Junior Matriculation, and two plays of Shakespeare in the case of Honour Matriculation.

4. That for both examinations the extensive reading be:

(1) A selection of short poems, amounting to some 3,000 lines. (To avoid repetition an anthology of five or six thousand lines should be used, the same being divided into two sections for alternate years.)

(2) Two or three longer poems, amounting to some 2,000 lines.

(3) A selected novel.

5. That the provisions for supplementary reading at home remain as at present.

History.

1. That there be four one-year courses provided for in schools that do work to Honour Matriculation:

(a) Canadian History, 1763 to the present, with a more extended course in Civics than the present one.

(b) British History, 1688 to the present, and a few important phases of North American History.

(c) Ancient History or General European History.

(d) Modern European History, 1789 to the present.

Of these four courses the first belongs to the Lower School, the second and third to the Middle School, the fourth to the Upper School.

2. The necessary Geography is to be taught in connection with each of the above courses.

3. Supplementary reading from historical fiction and biography should be provided in connection with each of the above courses.

4. Suitable text-books should be prepared on General European History and on Canadian Civics.

Mathematics.

1. That Arithmetic be a one year's course, the old distinction between First and Second Year Arithmetic being abolished.

2. That Trigonometry should remain unchanged, except that Inverse Functions should be added.

3. That, as an option for the Synthetic Geometry of the Upper School, a course in Solid Geometry of corresponding difficulty and breadth be prepared.

Latin.

1. That by the end of the second year of the Lower School course a pupil should have completed the introductory lessons of the High School Latin Book (i.e., to page 337), including the reading lessons, on which stress should be laid.

2. That a Latin Reader should be prepared for use in the Middle School. This reader should contain Latin of such a character as would serve (a) to introduce the pupil gradually to the difficulties of the ordinary Latin text, and (b) to enhance the interest of the subject matter.

3. That the Junior Matriculation requirements be modified to provide:

(a) That the prescribed portion of Caesar be shortened and that there be no translation set from this, but only questions in syntax. A considerable additional portion of Caesar should be read less intensively to prepare candidates for the test in sight translation, on which special stress should be laid.

(b) That the prose composition be based on the vocabulary and constructions of the introductory lessons of the High School Latin Book, as reviewed in the chapters in Syntax and Composition.

Modern Languages.

A. Lower School.

1. That any of the four languages—French, German, Spanish or Italian—may be taught at the discretion of the local authorities.

2. That it be advised as a general principle that no pupil begin the study of more than one modern language in the same year.

3. That oral work, accurate pronunciation, systematic study of sounds (not phonetic transcription), and a vocabulary of common words and easy sight reading be emphasized from the beginning.

4. That an easy Reader be used, with carefully-graded selections from suitable fiction and poetry, including selections from French-Canadian authors.

5. That Grammar be learned at first incidentally from oral work and from the Reader; later, systematically, from the regular Grammar text-book.

B. Middle and Upper Schools.

6. That the Middle School course in French Composition comprise the first 51 lessons of the French Grammar, together with the irregular verbs.

7. That in the choice of prescribed texts a committee should be consulted, consisting of representatives from the Universities, the Department, and the Modern Language section of the Ontario Educational Association.

8. That the examinations include tests in dictation (if practicable) and original composition, as well as sight translation and continuous prose, based on the idioms and the vocabulary in the prescribed texts and in common use.

9. That a Summer Course in French at some Quebec centre and a Summer Course in Italian be organized, and that the Summer Course in Spanish be continued.

Science.

1. That certain outlines for the courses in Botany and Zoology prepared by the sub-committee be adopted.

2. That approved text-books be used in the study of Botany and Zoology in the Lower School.

3. That the subject of Mineralogy be removed from the Upper School Course of Study.

4. That a course in Agriculture be prepared with the aid of the Ontario Agricultural College as an option for the Middle School Physics and Chemistry.

SUBJECTS STILL TO BE CONSIDERED.

The recommendations contained in this report deal almost exclusively with the courses of study and the examination system of the ordinary type of High School in this Province. Other questions affecting these schools have also engaged the Committee's attention; for instance, the admission of Public School pupils to the High School and the organization of school libraries and of such school activities as games and literary societies; but the consideration of these matters has not been carried to the point where the Committee is ready to report its conclusions. There also remain for investigation the problems presented by the organization of the new types of school referred to in the earlier portion of this report. On all these questions the Committee hopes to lay its findings before you in due time.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed on behalf of the Committee.)

F. W. MERCHANT,
Chairman.

J. C. ROBERTSON,
W. S. W. MCLAY,
I. M. LEVAN,
Editorial Committee.

